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AUTHOR Hauser, Jerald
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ABSTRACT

Teacher education professors need to intensify their searches for cooperative ventures between their campuses and community schools. It is crucial for teacher education students to be initiated into school day realities during their early semesters. This paper describes seven outreach efforts at St. Norbert College (Wisconsin) designed to increase school and college cooperation. These efforts show that not only does good theory inform good practice, but that good practice informs theory. The activities are: (1) early immersion programs; (2) professional growth experience seminars for cooperating teachers; (3) off-campus content immersions; (4) community outreach summer programs; (5) mock interview relays; (6) student teaching seminar experiments; and (7) cooperating teacher excellence recognitions. Each of the outreach activities represents an attempt to encourage teacher education professors into alternative adventures. (SM)

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A SUMMONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS! GET OFF THE CAMPUS AND INTO THE COMMUNITY!

by

Jerald Hauser

Saint Norbert College
De Pere, Wisconsin

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (San Antonio, TX, February 25-28, 1992).

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A Summons for Teacher Educators!
Get Off the Campus and Into the Community!

Teacher education professors need to intensify searches for cooperative ventures between their campuses and community schools. Crucial for teachers' professional preparation should be efforts to initiate them into school day realities during the early semesters of their college programs. Waller (1967)

> "But if theory is every really to be translated into practice, theorists must learn to follow it through the social dynamics of the classroom. Only such an experience can be fruitful in the understanding that will make possible a change of things that are."

Teacher education faculties and individual professors need to locate more of their professional energies in those social communities called schools. A panel appointed by Gov. Thomas Kean of New Jersey and chaired by Ernst Boyer pursued the dual mission of determining 1) what things beginning teachers must know and 2) how effective teachers teach. The panel concluded

> "...that the knowledge and skills it had identified are often neither conveyed effectively to new teachers nor applied in practice... Indeed, it is the conviction of the panel that teaching will become a profession in

this nation only as there is a closer and continuing link between theory and practice, between colleges and schools." (Cooperman and Klagholz, 1985).

The question of what teacher education professors can offer to and gain from real schools should be continually addressed. Recommended is not the demise of campus teacher education programs, but a mutual sharing of that territory with school system teachers and administrators. How can our professional programs reach outward? What resources in the schools are we neglecting to address? And what sources of campus power are we failing to offer school communities?

Creative outreaches from campuses meant to increase school and college cooperations will be described. The theory that college professors should feel "at home" with cooperating teachers and school system leaders is seldom opposed. That research professors have been conducting research in schools for several generations counts heavily, for some, as evidence of campus-to-school alliances. But is it? In the abstract, one may argue that research advances school practice, but in the concrete, many teachers know that research also advances college professor and doctoral student careers, without significant contribution back to their sources of data. We are not devaluing research professor energies, but advancing more direct quid pro

quo initiatives where real classroom events and campus program ideals are merged for college students.

Educational theory and practice have been historically dichotomized. Implicitly accepted for decades is the belief that good theory is learned on campus from teacher education professors and good practice is learned off campus from practicing teachers. The two sources do not share an authentic bond, though neither group may acknowledge it. Professors may tacitly view schools as threatening to undo the idealistic work forged in college classrooms. While out there ("in the trenches"), one of the finest compliments that employed teachers can offer a teacher education professor is that they are "down to earth and not too theoretical." (Schlechty and Whitford, 1985).

Though college professors who supervise student teachers may have more "field" influence than research professors, one need only look at their status on campus to further confirm the well known dichotomy; that school outreach by teacher education professors is inversely related to their status on campus.

> "Yet it is not uncommon to find teacher education occupying one of the lowest status positions within a school of education... Indeed, in major research institutions, it is not uncommon to find some of the most potentially powerful socializing experiences

(e.g., student teaching) relegated to the control of the lowest status persons in these systems, that is, to graduate students." (Schlechty and Whitford, 1985).

This summons for teacher educators to get into the community challenges the campus maxim that good theory informs good practice. Such belief may be innocuous, yet a powerful hierarchy becomes assumed - that elites who think a lot about teaching and schools send high truths to grunts who merely do the work of classroom teaching. May we modify that static maxim so that it represents a more respectful continuum expressed as "...*Good classroom practice informs good theory...which informs good classroom practice, which informs good theory, which...*" And so it should go onward.

MODEST EXPERIMENTS:

The question of how college teacher education programs and community schools can mutually nurture teacher education students can be directly addressed. Advances in formal and informal partnerships among campus professors, classroom teachers, and system administrators can flourish with new commitments and hard work.

In recent years, connection efforts at St. Norbert College by various teacher education professors have established: 1) early immersion programs, 2) growth experience seminars, 3) off-

campus content immersions, 4) student outreach programs, 5) mock-interview relays, 6) student teaching seminar experiments, and 7) co-operating teacher excellence recognitions.

Early Immersion Programs - First and second semester *sophomores* serve in area schools for full days and for an extended calendar period. Small and large group teaching activities are integrated. In addition to classroom teaching, students experience other opportunities including principal "shadowing," various arranged observations, and interactions with school personnel. Students are supervised by college professors, though daily guidance is exercised by carefully recruited classroom teachers. The average total clock time spent by students during their five week sophomore school assignments is about 150 hours.

Weekly seminar attendance back on the college campus in late afternoon is required for all "sophomore block" students. Real case study situations are discussed with block supervisors in those seminars. *Final Evaluation Seminars* follow the block immersions. These half day seminars offer assessment input by program students, cooperating teachers, and teacher education program professors.

Professional Growth Experience Seminars - Cooperating teachers participate in six "reflection seminars" on the college

campus. Each session is of two hour duration. Content agendas feature real challenges that cooperating teachers encounter with their student teachers. The seminars are open only to teachers currently involved in student teacher guidance and enrollment is limited to a maximum of fifteen cooperating teachers.

The major assignment for seminar participants is the creation of an extended journal where "meditations" about caring guidance of student teachers are frequently recorded. Literate, and machine printed final copies of these extended journals, along with 200-300 word abstracts, are submitted to the seminar coordinator at the conclusion of the semester.

Main concepts to guide seminar dialogues and journal writing include student teacher: 1) readiness, 2) competence, 3) confidence and affect, 4) role challenges and difficulties, 5) maturation, and 6) evaluation. Journals are carefully read by the coordinator who maintains a growing body of research on the nature of cooperating teacher reflections gained through the journals. The abstracts are sent on to a bureau administrator at the state department of public instruction. Approval for DPI issued clock hours to teacher participants is used from this DPI office.

These"professional growth seminars," with only currently involved cooperating teachers, are recommended over more

traditional courses for supervising teachers where class sizes may be much larger, enrollments more eclectic, and discourse less focused.

Off-Campus "Content Immersions" - Teacher education program students travel to selected schools as part of their methods courses in math. In assigned classrooms they apply theories of effective instruction to the actual teaching of math to pupils in classroom settings. These immersions are for five successive mornings as part of the math methods course taken during the sophomore year. Supervision and assessment of math teaching performances with small groups of pupils is conducted at school sites by the college course professor and participating teachers.

Another form of content immersion is "Project Wild - Fallen Timbers." Kindergarten, primary, elementary, and middle school students, enrolled in the sophomore science methods course, participate in a two day teaching workshop at an environmental education center forty miles from the college campus. Observations, data-collections, and extended discourse about teaching real science in classrooms are the essential activities. Guidance and assessment are offered by the course professor *who accompanies and teaches with* the students at the field center.

"Historical re-enactments" represent the innovative efforts

of a Social Science methods professor "...to demonstrate that social studies instruction can be authentic and engaging." Students in the Elementary Social Studies Methods course present historical event, character, and role-play episodes to pupils at actual museum sites. History content becomes dramatic for all participants, which means excellent instruction exemplified. But the creative connection of campus students and professors with local schools and historical sites is an exemplary model of college and school community alliance.

Community Outreach Programs - Three well respected St. Norbert summer outreach programs should be described.

The St. Norbert College *"Young Artist Workshops"* is a five week program, established in the summer of 1985 for physically challenged youth. Curricular immersions focus on the arts, including computer based performance technologies. Graduate and undergraduate credit courses are offered in the context of real teaching immersions with about eighty physically challenged youth who are a daily part of the program. Area teachers,college professors, and program students co-teach youth in this program.

The St. Norbert *"Precollege Education Power Workshop"* is a four week program, established in the summer of 1986 for pre-adolescent multicultural youth, identified by area guidance counselors as having college potential. The youth represent

Native, African, Asian, and Hispanic American cultures. Curricular immersions include science, computers, comprehensive communications instruction (reading, writing, and oral), and physical education. Area teachers, college professors, and program students co-teach youth in this program.

The St. Norbert College *"Math Camp"* is a two week residence program, established in the summer of 1989 for adolescent Native American youth, identified as having significant interest and talent in math and science. The Native American youth are recruited from around the country. Area teachers, college professors, and program students co-teach youth in this program.

"Mock-Interview Relays" - This campus outreach model very powerfully involves public and private school administrators. Each Spring, Superintendents, administrators, and guidance counselors, representing about sixty public and private schools, in three counties, are invited to the campus to "interview" college program seniors. The sessions occur in a large conference chamber where student seniors and the visiting administrators interact.

All participants understand that the "mock-interview" purpose is to simulate teacher screening and selection processes. Throughout the evening, administrators and personnel teams conduct half hour dialogues with college program seniors who have

either completed or are currently completing student and intern teaching assignments. Administrators conduct separate interview sessions with four student interviewees over a two hour time period. The final five to ten minutes of each half hour session is directed to debriefing the student interviewees about the quality of their responses. The "mock-interviews" are judged by all participants as excellent sources of important professional instruction not duplicated in traditional college courses.

Student Teaching Seminar Experiments - Traditionally, senior year student teachers are required to attend late-afternoon seminars on campus to discuss teaching experiences. But alternatives to the tradition of on-campus meetings should be considered. A seminar supervisor has experimented with seminars away from the campus and at school sites. This encourages interested cooperating teachers to attend and participate in those seminars making seminar agendas shared by the college supervisors, student teachers, *and cooperating teachers*.

Another seminar experiment, now in its third year, is called "the school contribution project." In addition to full day and full semester classroom teaching imperatives, student teachers are assigned to create and implement a project that can be performed or applied, then "given" to some person or group in the school. Examples of "school contribution projects" already

completed by St. Norbert College student teachers include:

1) Student teachers conducting various research efforts in their assigned schools and presenting documented results to principals, faculty, or parent groups.

2) Establishing (re-establishing) innovative classroom or school activities such as science fairs, student productions, or other expositions.

3) Researching and constructing unit plans to update and enrich a content period. The unit is then taught by the student teacher and presented as a gift to the cooperating teacher.

4) Creating a video tape to be viewed by future 5th graders that attractively presents middle school adventures awaiting new students from elementary schools.

School contribution projects by student teachers make their efforts more consequential to host schools and may even lessen student teachers' tendencies to become too self-focused or trapped in activities that begin to seem artificial.

Celebrating Outstanding Cooperating Teachers - How well established is the tradition of recognizing and honoring outstanding cooperating teachers? Recipients of such honors would be exemplary teachers with distinguished records of work with student teachers. Schools and school systems tend to ignore this professional dimension. Professional teacher organizations

also neglect such contributions from their membership. *Who honors excellent mentors for student teachers?* Shouldn't college and university programs do that?

In 1988 the St. Norbert College teacher education program initiated the annual Spring "Celebration Program" for student and cooperating teacher guest honorees. The honorees are selected each year by the Education Discipline faculty. Standards for selection include recommendations by student teachers, teacher peers, school administrators, and college program supervisors. Recognitions and appreciative gifts are presented to the honored cooperating teachers by the college. Efforts are made by the college to have the names of the honored cooperating teachers published in local press and communication media.

Final Exhortation:

These and other community alliance efforts are significant for many reasons. We perceive them as necessary and sometimes exemplary program models that enable campus teacher education programs to form school system partnerships. Each of the outreach models represent energies *to encourage teacher education professors into alternative adventures*. Such models, and many more, should be summoning us to begin the arduous, exciting, and creative work of planning and bravely moving beyond traditional campus safeties into the real school and teaching communities.

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